

## REMARKS

The Amendment is that of February 10, 2003 in which claim 21 was canceled, claim 20 was amended, and claim 24 was added. Additionally, claim 23 has been amended to provide antecedent basis for "metal oxide".

The rejection of claims 20, 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully traversed. The Examiner cites Van 'T Veen as teaching an average pore diameter in the range of 0.02  $\mu\text{m}$  to 1  $\mu\text{m}$  for a microporous layer. However, Van 'T Veen also indicates that a macroporous support can have pore sizes between 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$  or more (column 3, lines 7 - 8), and that macroporous materials normally exhibit structural irregularities that prevent the formation of a uniform microfilter (column 1, lines 29 - 32). Thus, Van 'T Veen indicates uncertainty about structural uniformity in the region of overlap between microporous and macroporous materials. Such uncertainty teaches away from the present invention and provides no motivation to apply the teachings of Van 'T Veen to macroporous materials with pore sizes in the range of 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  to 5  $\mu\text{m}$ . Accordingly, Van 'T Veen does not render the claims obvious.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. A timely Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Berliner", is written over a horizontal line.

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